

## Mayor Nickels' Proposal

# The 2004 Families & Education Levy



## Closing the Achievement Gap for Seattle's Children

### Introduction

In 1990 and again in 1997, Seattle voters approved the Families and Education Levy to support families and ensure that children and youth are “safe, healthy and ready to learn.” The levy has funded a variety of programs in schools, community-based organizations, health clinics and other providers. Recent studies, however, show alarming trends: Too many children are unprepared to start school; too many students drop out before completing high school; and too many children do poorly academically. A disproportionate share of these children are poor, of color, or both. Parents, community leaders and educators demand that Seattle do better for its children. The 2004 levy proposal offers new direction for strategic investment in these children.

### Levy Overview

The proposed 2004 Families and Education Levy was developed over the past two years by a 42-member Citizens Advisory Committee, a seven-member Levy Oversight Committee and the Mayor's Office. The proposal represents ideas collected from more than 2,500 educators, community leaders, service providers, youth, parents and concerned individuals. It reflects lessons learned from the first and second levies, as well as from national research identifying approaches that get results for children.

The proposed plan invests about \$103 million over seven years to help children, youth and families in Seattle. It is strengthened by a focus on services that will make *measurable* improvements in preparing children to enter school, increasing academic achievement and improving health. With investments from the City's general fund, the levy supports the Seattle Public Schools' priorities, such as increasing parent involvement and closing achievement gaps, especially for children of color and children from low-income families.

Compared with the \$69 million 1997 levy, the 2004 plan doubles the amount invested in early learning, increases funding for after-school programs, and adds money for family involvement in the community. It also makes certain that investments achieve desired results through evaluation.

Under this plan, more children will enter kindergarten ready to learn; more youth will get help when there are warning signs such as truancy and suspension; student grades will improve and graduation rates will go up. To make all of this happen, managers of levy-funded programs run by the City and community-based organizations will work closely with the Seattle Public Schools.

### 2004 Levy Next Steps

- April 12 — Mayor Nickels submits Families and Education Levy proposal to the City Council
- April-June — Council deliberates, takes public comment
- July — Council scheduled to take action on levy proposal for fall

For more information and to learn how to help, visit [www.seattle.gov/familiesedlevy](http://www.seattle.gov/familiesedlevy).